

add that to the 35 percent of the population that is the essential workforce, that is 50 percent of the population that could have the vaccine if they chose to have it.

I think most people think that we are there, in our State and other places, by sometime in April. In fact, Dr. Fauci said that Americans determined to be at the highest risk—healthcare workers, frontline workers, seniors, those with underlying conditions—could be vaccinated by the end of the year.

Certainly, if there is a second shot, it might be by the end of January, and you have 15 percent of the whole population vaccinated by the end of January or sometime in January, and another 35 percent would have the vaccine available to them by sometime in April.

Then we look at the rest of the population. But in each step of the way—let me say again—every time you take somebody off the playing field of where contact with the virus could successfully occur, everybody else gets safer too.

If a person who has been vaccinated is where the germs happen to land instead of the person standing beside them who wasn't vaccinated, the life of that particular germ is gone, and eventually that is how you emerge from a pandemic. There just aren't enough people left for this to land on that either haven't had it or haven't had the vaccine to prevent it.

It is a critical time. It is an important time. I think we have written two new chapters in pandemic response, both in testing and in vaccines.

Operation Warp Speed has done in months what typically can take 10 to 15 years and, even in an expedited way, can take 2 to 3 to 5 years.

Given the urgent need to beat this virus, I think Operation Warp Speed, with the great scientific community—a lot of this is built on research that was funded by NIH. One of the priorities of the Congress for the last 5 years has been to increase NIH funding, at a time when we know more about genetics.

Two of these vaccines are basically based on the molecular code that is sort of the software for genetics. It is a different way than vaccines have been developed before and would not have been developed without government-encouraged research.

Having a diverse selection of vaccines means there are different people producing vaccines at the same time in different places, and we will have, more likely, a quick and fair distribution of any FDA-authorized vaccines.

Certainly, I have been frustrated, as many of us have, to think that we have not been able to reach an agreement on what money we might need to finish this vaccine effort, the distribution effort.

Hopefully, we can come to the next round of COVID relief sooner rather than later.

As I said earlier this week, a targeted funding package now will have a lot

more impact than a much bigger package would have 4 or 5 months from now. There is no reason we shouldn't be able to find common ground. This is a time when we can make that effort to finish the job. The pandemic is affecting Americans every day. I have talked to a lot of people who have seen greater numbers of drug dependency and huge declines in mental health because that support network is gone and isolation has taken over, and worry about family, finances, and health has become a big part of that.

Let's show the people we work for that we are going to be able to continue this job, and let's praise the great researchers in our country and others who stepped forward in incredible ways to do things that just 9 months ago nobody thought could possibly be established in the timeframe we are working on right now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 568.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination. The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Lanny Erdos, of Ohio, to be Director of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Erdos nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING CHARLES CARROLL SMITH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a few moments to say fare-

well to a friend and a public servant who served my State of Illinois and our Nation well. His name was Charles Carroll Smith, but his friends called him Charlie. He died on the day after Thanksgiving. Our paths crossed often over the years.

Charlie served as Illinois' deputy secretary of state under then-Secretary of State Alan Dixon. When Alan Dixon was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1980, Charlie came to Washington with him. He was a key member of the Dixon staff, serving as both legislative director and senior national security adviser. When Alan Dixon left the Senate, Charlie joined the staff of Kentucky Senator Wendell Ford, then the Senate's Democratic whip. Charlie was Senator Ford's legislative staff director and a trusted adviser to Senator Ford on matters involving national security and foreign relations.

He helped craft and pass many important pieces of legislation, including the 1990 law establishing the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission in 1990. He went on to serve as executive director of the 1995 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission—a massive task to try to realign America's military bases with the realities of the post-Cold War world.

The work of the Base Closure Commission was necessary, complex, and historic, and Charlie's intricate understanding of both the Defense Department and the security needs of America and our allies was critical to the commission's success. Despite the gargantuan task, Charlie was never too busy to listen. I and all of the Members of the Illinois congressional delegation appreciated his willingness to always consider fairly our explanations about the national security importance of the military bases in our State. He never put his thumb on the scale for Illinois, but he made sure that we received a fair hearing. The day the commission announced its recommendations in 2005, Charlie called me to explain in layman's language just what the recommendations meant for Illinois and for America. I have never met anyone with a greater understanding of the workings of the Defense Department and the ability to translate that knowledge into plain English. He was a rare one.

Charlie came by his political and legislative skills the old-fashioned way. He inherited them. He grew up in an Irish Catholic Democratic family on the North Side of Chicago. His father was in politics; his mother was a professor. Charlie was the first-born and only son in the family of three children.

The Smith family took politics and democracy seriously. Charlie and his father were both named Charles Carroll Smith, senior and junior. Family legend has it that they were descended from Charles Carroll, one of the signers of America's Declaration of Independence and a member of the Continental Congress. Whether it was true or not—